

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing the use of electronic content, the method including:

executing an application program, the application program being capable of rendering electronic content, the application program having at least a first digital certificate predefined attribute associated therewith;

requesting the application program to render a piece of electronic content, the piece of electronic content having at least a second digital certificate predefined attribute associated therewith, and the piece of electronic content further having associated therewith at least one electronic rule, the electronic rule including data specifying one or more conditions associated with rendering the piece of electronic content, the one or more conditions including a condition that the piece of electronic content may be rendered by an application program[[s]] having the first digital certificate predefined attribute associated therewith;

verifying the association of the second digital certificate predefined attribute with the piece of electronic content;

examining the data included in the electronic rule to determine that the piece of electronic content may be rendered by an application program having the first digital certificate associated therewith;

verifying the association of the first digital certificate ~~predefined attribute~~ with the application program;

rendering the piece of electronic content using the application program.

2. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 1, in which the first digital certificate ~~predefined attribute~~ is generated by a first entity, and the second digital certificate ~~predefined attribute~~ is generated by a second entity different from the first entity.
3. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 2, in which the first entity comprises an association of one or more content providers, and the first digital certificate ~~predefined attribute~~ is associated with the application program if the application program meets certain predefined criteria set by the association.
4. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 3, in which the second entity comprises an entity concerned with controlling the nature of the electronic content that is rendered by the application program, and the second digital certificate ~~attribute~~ is associated with the piece of electronic content if the piece of electronic content meets certain predefined standards.
5. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 4, in which the second entity comprises a private or governmental entity that determines whether content is appropriate for minors, and the second digital certificate ~~attribute~~ indicates that the piece of electronic content is deemed to be appropriate for minors.

6. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 3, in which the piece of electronic content comprises a prescription, and in which the first entity associates the first digital certificate ~~attribute~~ with the application program if it is determined that the application program will handle the prescription with at least a predefined level of security.
7. (Original) A method as in claim 6, in which the predefined level of security includes a requirement that the application verify that an application user has a predefined certificate before rendering the prescription.
8. (Original) A method as in claim 7, in which predefined certificate indicates that the user is a licensed pharmacist.
9. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 7, in which a certified pharmacist is identified by ~~an attribute~~ a digital certificate issued by a third entity different from the first and second entities.
10. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 4, in which the second entity associates the second digital certificate ~~attribute~~ with the prescription if the prescription originated from a certified physician.
11. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 10, in which a certified physician is identified by ~~an~~ a certificate issued by a third entity different from the first and second entities.

12. (Original) A method as in claim 11, in which the second entity determines that a prescription originated from a certified physician by checking for the presence of the certificate issued by the third entity.

13. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 12, in which the rendering application is further associated with a fourth digital certificate attribute, the fourth digital certificate attribute attesting to a determination having been made by a fourth entity that the application program possesses a predefined functionality.

14. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 13, in which the predefined functionality includes functionality that ensures that the application program verifies the presence association of the second digital certificate with the piece of electronic content attribute before rendering the piece of electronic content.

15. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 14, further including:

verifying the association between the application and the fourth digital certificate attribute.

16. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 1, in which the step of verifying the presence association of the second digital certificate with the piece of electronic content predefined attribute is performed during or after the step of verifying the presence association of the first digital certificate with the application program predefined attribute.

17. (New) A method as in claim 1, in which the step of verifying the association of the first digital certificate with the application program includes computing a hash of at least part of the application program, and comparing the hash to a value contained in the digital certificate.

18. (New) A method as in claim 1, further including:

decrypting a secure container containing the piece of electronic content and the electronic rule; and

retrieving the electronic rule from the secure container.

19. (New) A method comprising:

receiving a request from an application program to render a piece of electronic content, the piece of electronic content having at least one electronic rule associated therewith, the electronic rule including data specifying one or more conditions associated with rendering the piece of electronic content, the one or more conditions including a condition that the piece of electronic content may be rendered by an application program having a predefined digital certificate associated therewith, the predefined digital certificate attesting to the application program's possession of one or more characteristics;

retrieving the electronic rule;

examining the data included in the electronic rule to determine that the piece of electronic content may be rendered by an application program having the predefined digital certificate associated therewith;

verifying the association of the predefined digital certificate with the application program;

granting the request to render the piece of electronic content using the application program if the verifying step is successful.

20. (New) A method as in claim 19, in which the predefined digital certificate indicates that the application program checks output drivers for integrity.